

TO THE

IRISH EMIGRANTS,

SETTLED IN

LOWER-CANADA.**FRIENDS AND FELLOW SUBJECTS,**

You have lately been addressed, as Irishmen only, without distinction of religious belief, by "A True friend,"—to put you on your guard against designing men, who for personal objects and party purposes, wish to excite your naturally vehement feelings, and to draw you in to make common cause with them in pursuing those objects: I wish to warn you against a particular class of these agitators, who wickedly appeal to your religious feelings and principles, and endeavour to make you believe that your religion is in danger, and that it is your duty to support it by voting against Protestant candidates, at this election.

They tell you that the Government ^{had} designs against your religion, and that you should therefore oppose any candidate who has ever supported a Government (or is likely to support it), on ^{other} questions: They seek in short to make you the instruments of publishing here those religious feuds and animosities which distract our unhappy mother Country; I will in a few plain words, and by simple facts shew you how little reason there is, in this country, for any complaint on the score of religious intolerance or persecution; and how impossible it is that that unhappy state of things which exists in Ireland can ever, in any degree, exist here; and you will then see through the false pretences and mischievous artifices of these men who thus wantonly mislead you:

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What were the hardships you suffered in Ireland, on account of your religion? and what is your condition here, in that respect?

1. In Ireland, no Catholic Peer or Commoner, can sit, or vote, in either House of Parliament.

In this Province, though we have not a House of Lords, we have, what corresponds to it, a Legislative Council, and we have a Commons House of Assembly: Catholics may, by law, sit in both Houses: In the Council, there are now eight of them: The late Catholic Bishop sat there in his lifetime: He was one of 14 new members whom the King appointed in one year; *seven of whom were Catholics.*

The majority of the House of Assembly are and always will be Catholics.

Is this like Ireland?

2. In Ireland, no Catholic can be chosen a member of the Privy Council, or be made a Judge, or hold an office in the Courts of law, or in a Corporation, or be one of the King's Counsel in the law.—Here, we have no Privy Council, but we have an Executive Council, which is the same thing; and Catholics are, and have been, members of the Executive Council, equally with Protestants. They may be, and are, appointed Judges, and may, and do hold any office about the Courts of law: Not many years ago, the Solicitor General was a Catholic; the Advocate General and two out of three King's Council in the law are now Catholics; and every existing Corporation in the Province (except perhaps one), consists wholly, or in part, of Catholics.

Is this like Ireland?

3. In Ireland, no Catholic Marriage is legal, unless the ceremony is also performed by a Protestant Clergyman.

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In this province, marriages by your Priests, are as valid and good as those performed by Protestant Clergymen.

Is this like Ireland ?

4. In Ireland, you were not, by law, allowed to settle your property on Catholic Schools or Churches, or for any Catholic purposes ; you could not vote at vestries, though you were obliged to pay the assessments made by them ; and above all you were compelled to pay tithes, which went to the support of a Protestant Clergy.

Here, the Catholics may give any land or property to their Churches or Schools, as freely as they could have done when the Country was governed by a Catholic King :—An act was passed by the Provincial Legislature a few years ago, for the express purpose of making it more easy, both for Catholics and Protestants, to endow Elementary Schools in the Parishes, either with money or land ; and as to Tithes, your Clergy have the right, by a law made in the British Parliament, in 1774, to exact their Tithes and Dues from their Parishioners. But the Protestant Clergy cannot receive Tithes ; they are obliged to be supported by the money of the British Government, or by charitable religious Societies ; and finally, your Bishop receives from that same Government a salary of £1000 per annum.

Is all or any of this like Ireland ?

Answer me like true hearted Irishmen ; do these facts, which cannot be denied, look like a design on the part of Government to injure your religion, or to oppress you because of it ? And whatever may have been your condition in Ireland as to religious disabilities, can you deny that you stand here on a level with your Protestant brethren ? Or can you as Irishmen, as men possessing a spark of generosity, good feeling or gratitude, refuse to give the Government credit and support for its justice and liberality ?

But there is yet more :

To crown and preserve to you that happy state of perfect equality and toleration which I have been showing that you enjoy, the British Parliament has declared that the Provincial Legislature shall not have power to pass any act affecting or altering your religious privileges, or laying any sort of new burthen upon you for the support of religion ; or in any way connected with the exercise of religious worship, without first obtaining the consent of the Kings, Lords, and Commons of Great Britain, to such act. So that, even if it were possible, which it is not, that the Majority of the House of Assembly and Council, here, should ever be Protestants, or that they, being Catholics, should wish to alter the present constitution such as I have described it to you, in matters of religion, *they cannot do so* ; the Governor cannot assent to an act for doing so.

But it must be finally sanctioned and approved by that body,—the Parliament of Great Britain, which has *established* your Religion *by law* in this Country, and which will probably, before another twelve-month, Emancipate it by law, in the Country which you have left.

My friends, I might go on and appeal to such of you as have suffered poverty and distress since you landed on these shores, to say who they are that have done most for your relief in sickness and want ; was it the persons who are now stirring up a spirit of discontent and opposition to Government among you, or was it the Government itself, and that class of society among which the principal supporters of Government are found ? If any of you have occasionally at the outset, been relieved in money, I might ask you from whom you received *pence*, and from whom you received *pounds*.

But, though others seek to move your more violent passions or prejudices, I will not seek to move

you even to gratitude by considerations of this sort : I appeal to you on broader grounds, as men who ought to shew your confidence to, and contentment with the Government that has, as you must feel, dealt more liberally and kindly with you here than in your Mother Land ; and I cannot do better than close with two extracts from a pamphlet published lately by Lord Nugent, (one of the most staunch supporters of Catholic emancipation, and a plain honest upright and high principled man : First he truly says, "On subjects like these," (religious persecution and intolerance "silence on all sides, and a mutual interchange of forgiveness, repentance, and oblivion is wisdom ; but *to quote grievances only on one side is not honesty ;*" And again, (and this is more to my present purpose) "To the imputation" (that the allegiance of Catholics is a divided allegiance, and that therefore Catholic Emancipation would endanger the Church and State of England) —"The full, sufficient and incontestable answer is CANADA, (See Note at the end.)

My friends, these things deserve your consideration ; weigh them well and act for yourselves.—Shun combination with the men who are seeking to inflame you : When they endeavour to excite your feelings and turn you to the bitter recollection of the past, suspect and avoid them : they are no friends to your peace or to the peace and good order of society. Distrust their motives and designs ; for be assured, those who are thus working upon your feelings for their own purposes, will cast you aside as blunt and useless tools, when those purposes are by your assistance accomplished, they will leave you then to wander where you please, and starve, or deride your want and nakedness, as they have hitherto done, by nicknaming you "*Bas de Soie d'Irlande,*" or the "*Silk Stocking Beggars, from Ireland.*"

I have only one word more : it will bring to your recollection, as it does to mine, that lovely land which I have trod from one end to the other, with

those mingled feelings of admiration, delight and pain, which every man of Irish blood and extraction must experience there, but which at this distance are softened down to affectionate regret for "the land of our forefathers,

ERIN GO BRAGH."

NOTE.—On your conquest of Canada, you found it Roman Catholic ; you had to chuse for her a Constitution in Church and State : you were wise enough not to thwart public opinion :—In Canada, you established and *endowed* the Religion of the people : Canada was your only Roman Catholic Colony : your other Colonies revolted ;—and they achieved their independence : Catholic Canada, with what Lord Liverpool would call her half allegiance, *alone* stood by you : to reward and encourage her loyalty, you endowed in Canada, Bishops to say Mass, and to ordain others to say Mass, whom at that very time your laws would have hanged for saying Mass in England :—When you allow to the Catholics their religion, undisturbed, it has proved itself to be compatible with the most faithful allegiance.

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